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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/735,407	12/12/2003	Jane Smith Parker	190250-1720	2094
38823	7590	10/23/2008	EXAMINER	
AT&T Legal Department Attn: Patent Docketing One AT&T Way Room 2A-207 Bedminster, NJ 07921			PARKER, BRANDI P	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3624	
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			10/23/2008	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/735,407

Applicant(s)

PARKER, JANE SMITH

Examiner

BRANDI P. PARKER

Art Unit

3624

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 24 July 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-31 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-31 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SF/ICE)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 8/21/2008
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Acknowledgements

1. The following is a Final Office action in response to communications filed on July 24, 2008. Claims 1, 11, 22 and 30 have been amended.

Response to Applicant's Remarks

2. Applicant's amendment to claim 1, filed on July 24, 2008, has been fully considered and is persuasive. The rejection of claims 1-10 under 35 USC § 101 has been withdrawn.
3. Applicant's amendment to claim 1 and 22, filed on July 24, 2008, has been fully considered and is persuasive. The rejection of claims 1-10 and 22-31 under 35 USC § 112 has been withdrawn.
4. In response to Applicant's argument that Leamon does not teach, disclose or suggest a vacation request processing system that receives and email, Examiner respectfully disagrees. In response to applicant's arguments against the references individually, one cannot show nonobviousness by attacking references individually where the rejections are based on combinations of references. See *In re Keller*, 642

F.2d 413, 208 USPQ 871 (CCPA 1981); *In re Merck & Co.*, 800 F.2d 1091, 231 USPQ 375 (Fed. Cir. 1986).

Green teaches a system for requesting a vacation through a user interface. (column/line 4/52-5/34). Leamon teaches a contact center environment with the capability to process messages through email. Because using email in a work environment is old and well known in the art, it would have been obvious to one with ordinary skill in the art modify the system in Green by substituting using the user interface on the computer for submitting a vacation request with sending an email. Thus, the simple substitution of one known element for another producing a predictable result renders the claim obvious. Therefore, Green in view of Leamon does teach and suggest this limitation.

5. In response to Applicant's argument that Leamon or Green does not teach, disclose or suggest a communications switch, Examiner respectfully disagrees. Leamon teaches an Automatic Call Distributor ("ACD") that identifies an incoming call type and either delivers the call by routing it to a particular agent or queuing the call. It is old and well known in the art that a communications switch is used to connect telephone calls. Therefore it would have been obvious to one with ordinary skill in the art to substitute the ACD in Leamon as a communications switch since the simple substitution of one known element for another producing a predictable result renders the

claim obvious. Therefore, Green in view of Leamon does teach and suggest this limitation.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claims 1-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Green (US 6192346) in view of Leamon (US 6970829).

8. With respect to **claims 1, 11 and 22**, Green teaches Logic stored on a computer readable medium that when executed causes a computer to perform a vacation processing system, the logic comprising:

- a. logic configured to provide a vacation eligibility criteria based on at least a first rule (column/line 4/63-5/11, Figure 6); and
- b. logic configured to process the vacation request of a first employee based on the workload estimate and the vacation eligibility criteria (column/line 4/52-5/34).

- c. Logic configured to receive from a first employee a vacation request through a computer interface (column/line 4/52-5/34);

Green does not explicitly teach providing a workload statistic used to operate a call center. However, Leamon teaches

- d. logic configured to provide a workload estimate comprising at least a first workload statistic that is used to operate a first call center (column/line 5/40-47)

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to modify the system in Green with the disclosure in Leamon since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

Furthermore, because using email in a work environment is old and well known in the art, it would have been obvious to one with ordinary skill in the art modify the system in Green by substituting using the user interface on the computer for submitting a vacation request with sending an email. Thus, the simple substitution of one known element for another producing a predictable result renders the claim obvious.

9. As to **claims 2, 12 and 23**, Leamon teaches wherein the first workload statistic comprises an estimated volume of telephone calls that the first call center is expected to handle over a first period of time (column/line 1/48-51).

10. Regarding **claims 3, 13 and 24**, Leamon teaches wherein the first workload statistic comprises an estimated volume of telephone calls that the first call center is expected to handle over a first period of time, and wherein the estimated volume of telephone calls is derived from historical call volume data obtained from a communications switch (column/line 19/26-34).

11. With respect to **claims 4, 14 and 25**, Green teaches wherein the first workload statistic comprises an expected number of operators needed to operate the first call center during a first period of time (column/line 4/21-28, 4/34-37).

12. As to **claims 5, 15 and 26** Leamon teaches wherein the first workload statistic is derived from telephone call data stored in a database of a communications switch that routes incoming calls or place the calls in a queue. (column/line 1/48-51, 3/12-18, 19/26-34). Although Leamon does not explicitly teach storing call data in the database of a POTS switch, Examiner notes that it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to substitute a communication switch with a queuing system for a POTS switch because the call center operators' telephone lines can be connected to speed the call transfer process.

1. Regarding **claims 6, 16 and 27**, Green teaches system of claim 1, wherein the first rule is derived from an employment grade of the first employee, and wherein the

employment grade comprises at least one of a payscale and a length of service of the first employee (Figure 5, item 96; column/line 5/56-65) .

2. With respect to **claims 7, 17 and 28**, Leamon teaches wherein the workload estimate is provided to the first call center in a timely basis, the timely basis comprising at least one of an hourly basis, a daily basis, a weekly basis, a monthly basis, a quarterly basis, a semi-annual basis, and an annual basis (column/line 4/38-44).

3. As to **claims 8, 18 and 29**, Green teaches the system of claim 7, wherein the vacation eligibility criteria is provided in a timely basis, the timely basis comprising at least one of an hourly basis, a daily basis, a weekly basis, a monthly basis, a quarterly basis, a semi-annual basis, and an annual basis (Figure 4, column/line 4/63-5/4).

4. Regarding **claims 19, 21 and 30** Green teaches, wherein logic configured to process the vacation request comprises: logic configured to receive the vacation request of the first employee; logic configured to deny the vacation request due to a lack of vacation availability at a time of the vacation request; and logic configured to grant the vacation request due to a vacation availability at a time after the vacation request was denied (Figure 3, column/line 6/37-43).

5. As to **claims 10, 20 and 31**, Green teaches wherein granting the vacation request comprises providing a summary of the available vacation days. Although Green does not teach transmitting an e-mail to send notification of the approval of the vacation request, Leamon teaches a call contact center with the capability to conduct transactions through email (column/line 4/22-28).

Conclusion

13. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

14. A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the mailing date of this final action.

15. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to **BRANDI P. PARKER** whose telephone number is (571) 272-9796. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Thurs. 8-5pm.

16. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Bradley B. Bayat can be reached on (571) 272-6704. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

17. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/BRANDI P PARKER/
Examiner, Art Unit 3624

/Bradley B Bayat/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3624